

PROVINCIAL NEWS

NEW BRUNSWICK

In 1963 the Report of the Royal Commission on Municipal Finance and Taxation, the Byrne Report, caused a good deal of comment in medical circles in this province and elsewhere. The main recommendations were that there be four commissions to take over and operate the province's affairs in the fields of Health (including Hospitals), Education, Justice, and Municipal Affairs (including Welfare).

Since then the Government has given continuing study to this report and many interested groups have submitted briefs on it. On November 16, 1965, Premier Louis J. Robichaud gave a major policy address to the Legislature of New Brunswick. He described the Government's plans as a "program of evolution", and one would need to read the complete address to understand it fully. Particular references to hospitals, health, and government by commission, are made in the following quotations from the Premier's address.

1. "In summary, the Province will assume those responsibilities, presently carried by municipalities, for: Education, Welfare, Justice and Public Health.

"The assumption by the Province of these responsibilities necessitates the re-examination of the position of our local government institutions."

2. "The Government rejects, at this time, a recommendation of the Royal Commission that the hospitals of the Province become provincially owned. The problems within the hospital system which were recognized by the Royal Commission are to a great extent still present.

"However, the Government would prefer to work with the hospital boards towards achieving a satisfactory system rather than resort to provincial ownership. To this end, more stringent regulatory controls will be exercised under the present legislation.

"The Province will assume the full responsibility for the provision of public health services which are currently carried out by the municipalities. The Province will assume such capital hospital construction costs as are currently carried by municipal governments.

3. "As can now be readily understood, the Government is not 'implementing the Royal Commission Report'."

"As was noted in the White Paper, the Royal Commission Report provides one path towards the implementation of the responsibilities of government today. We are not satisfied that it was the only path. It is not the only path.

"The Royal Commission proposed a system of extreme centralization, a system of less local government, narrower voting rights, and a restricted voice by the people in their affairs. This Government, Mr. Speaker, has rejected these aspects of the Royal Commission Report.

"It was contended by the Royal Commission that the people must be protected from themselves; that their elected representatives, acting under a parliamentary system which evolved over centuries, are not fit to administer the affairs of the Province they were elected to govern. As was stated in the Speech from the

Throne, we see no place for additional administrative commissions in the Government of New Brunswick.

"These commissions were to somehow improve the efficiency of the administrative process, remove the presence of political pressures (and there I use the term 'political' in its broadest sense) and at the same time remain responsible to the people through their elected representatives.

"The commissions were to be drawn from a wide variety of vested and non-vested interests. The people were to be at the mercy of 'experts' on the one hand and complete novices on the other.

"This Government believes in responsible government. This Government believes in democracy.

"This is not, Mr. Speaker, to say that all that the Royal Commission has done or said is wrong for New Brunswick. This Commission, and those that preceded it, have done a great service to this Province. Many of their recommendations are sound and we have incorporated them in our legislation. Many of the recommendations of interested parties who submitted briefs are sound and have been incorporated in our legislation."

Nearly 200 doctors from the four Atlantic Provinces and Quebec attended the Third Atlantic Regional Meeting of the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada, held in Saint John early in October.

The guest speakers were Drs. Joseph P. Hoet of Louvain, Belgium; Theodore Rasmussen, Lloyd D. MacLean, Martin M. Hoffman and Kenneth J. MacKinnon of Montreal; Bentley P. Colcock of Boston, and D. A. Rosen of Kingston.

Forty-five doctors from the Atlantic Provinces contributed to the clinical program.

Dr. Walter MacKenzie, President of the Royal College, addressed a luncheon meeting, and Dr. Frank MacKinnon, Principal of Prince of Wales College, Charlottetown, was guest speaker at the dinner.

Local arrangements were made by Drs. W. D. Miller, H. J. Rosen, H. O. Tønning and J. A. Finley, ably assisted by a committee of the ladies.

The scientific presentations were timely and instructive, with excellent attendance at all sessions. The general impression was that this Third Atlantic Regional Meeting was most successful.

F. L. WHITEHEAD

NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR

If the summer was a busy time for Newfoundland and Labrador doctors preparing for the great change ahead, then the winter represents a further intensification. There are two reasons for this. The first reason is obviously medicare, whatever that comes to mean and on the practical level this is somewhat uncertain. The second reason is not quite so obvious, as it represents the insidious and rapid development of the social scene since Confederation. "Insidious" connotes

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physician

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"more dangerous than seems evident" (Webster), and this is certainly so in the medical aspect. Only recently has action become apparent to cope with the increased demands of a more prosperous and educated population who have quite suddenly unlimited access to all medical facilities through the newly paved Trans-Canada Highway and a developing collateral roads system. Considerable hospital development and change is already under way and the centres outside St. John's are in a better position at this time than the Capital City itself.

In St. John's the 200-bed addition to the Grace Hospital is far advanced and a five-year development plan has been announced for the General Hospital. The new 300-bed Children's Hospital situated in the former U.S.A.A.F. Hospital at Pleasantville (Fort Pepperrell) is scheduled for opening in mid 1966. Detailed planning by those concerned has been held up until the Report of Lord Brain's Royal Commission on Health for Newfoundland becomes available. Much depends on his recommendations, as also on the report of the Committee studying the feasibility of a medical school for Newfoundland. This summer the University had many visitors from the U.S.A., mainland Canada and Europe, all experts in various aspects of medical education. Their report is expected shortly and will obviously influence the choice of site for a teaching hospital.

Professor A. V. Neale, Emeritus Professor of Child Health and Paediatrics, University of Bristol, England, is at present in Newfoundland advising on the organization and staffing of the new Children's Hospital.

On the educational front, the Dalhousie refresher course has now been completed. Dr. A. R. Mercer, representing genitourinary surgery, Dr. George H. Flight, obstetrics and gynecology, Dr. J. D. B. Baird, general surgery, Dr. D. W. Ingram, internal medicine, and Dr. S. Hammerling, describing the treatment of ear infections, lectured to groups in Corner Brook, St. Anthony, Grand Falls, Gander and Carbonear.



Dr. J. E. Josephson

Newfoundland doctors were particularly pleased in the appointment of Dr. J. E. Josephson to the Presidency of the Medical Council of Canada. A native of Hamilton, Ontario, and a graduate of Queen's University, Kingston, Ontario, Dr. Josephson came to Newfoundland in 1938. Working for the Commission of Government, he established a pathology and bacteriology service for the whole of Newfoundland. This service subsequently came to cater successfully to the needs of 500,000 persons. In 1957 he was appointed to the Medical Council of Canada and has served as a member since then.

J. B. Ross